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SUBJECT: VIETNAM REFUSES TO CONDEMN RUSSIA'S RECOGNITION OF ABKHAZIA
AND SOUTH OSSETIA

REF: STATE 92371

¶1. (SBU) On August 28, the Ambassador spoke with Vice FM Pham Binh Minh to urge that Vietnam's PermRep publicly and forcefully condemn Russia's August 26 decision to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Per reftel, the Ambassador stressed that the Security Council, if it meets in special session, should call upon Russia to revoke its recognition of the two separatist regions and reaffirm in strong terms Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Russia must implement President Sarkozy's six-point plan, as clarified in the French President's subsequent letter to President Saakashvili, and begin cooperating with the OSCE, EU, and UN to deploy an international mechanism to bring stability to the region, the Ambassador emphasized.

¶2. (SBU) VFM Minh responded that while Vietnam has been in favor of international mediation and supports the Sarkozy plan, his government would not condemn Russia. In Vietnam's view, the crisis was initiated by Saakashvili's decision to move into South Ossetia, at the cost of civilian life. Russia's decision, Minh continued, was moreover a direct consequence of the U.S.-led movement to recognize Kosovo, which Vietnam had opposed. The Ambassador rejected any comparison with Kosovo, emphasizing that until June of this year, Kosovo had been administered by the UN according to UNSC resolutions and that Kosovo's independence was the result of a long, complicated process of negotiation, led by the UN. None of these aspects applied in the case of South Ossetia or Abkhazia, the Ambassador told Minh.

MICHALAK